

An Inquiry as to the Influence
of Moliere's "Avare" on English
Comedy of the Eighteenth
Century

by Martin Kahao Brooks

1912

Submitted to the Department of Romance
Languages and Literature of the University
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Introduction.

The thorough study of any play involves, naturally, a careful examination of its sources, of the play itself, and of its influence upon subsequent literature of the same type both at home and abroad. When we study the sources of a play we may have several ends in view. We may decide in what respects the author has been original, in what he has not, and also whether much or little credit is due him according as he has in our opinion made good use or bad of his material. If we examine just the play itself then other considerations are uppermost in our mind. We may try to answer first of all the question, has the author done what he set out to do; second, if not, to what extent has he failed to do so; third, if he has done so, how well has he succeeded, and by means of what literary devices. Again, we may examine the play with reference to its influence upon dramatic literature of the same type abroad, which is the manner after which we intend to study "l'Avare" in this inquiry.

The field of research then open to a student of "l'Avare" is broad. If he examines its sources he must take into account the "Aulularia" and the "Mostellaria" of Plautus, "La Belle Plaideuse" by Boisrobert, "Les Esprits" by Larivey, "I Suppositi" by Ariosto, and the "Aridosia" by Lorenzino de Medici.

1.-"Les Grands Ecrivains", Tome 7, p. 14 ff.; "Molière's L'Avare", M. Levi, p. 9 ff., intr.; "Histoire de la Littérature Française", G. Lanson, pp. 509, 517; "Lorenzaccio", P. Gauthiez, p. 373: "Mais pour Molière, le 'maître du chœur', on a vu que l'imitation est flagrante; ce que 'l'Avare' doit à 'l'Aridosia', il est possible que Molière l'ait reçu à travers Larivey, mais il est bien plus probable qu'il l'a pris à la source, directement."

In addition, if he wishes his inquiry to be exhaustive, he must examine the plays that may have furnished Molière with material for "l'Avare", such as "La Veuve" by Larivey, "L'Héritier ridicule" by Scarron, "Les Barbons amoureux" by Chevelier, "La Dame d'intrigue" by Chappuzeau, "La Mère coquette" by Quinault, "La Sporta" by Gelli¹, "L'Avare cornu" by Doni², and perhaps "El Castigo de la Miseria", a "novela" by Doña Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor³. As to the "comedia" of the same name by Juan de la Hoz y Mota, it is based on both the "novela" just mentioned and "l'Avare"⁴. It has also been argued that the following named comedies, belonging to the Italian style known as "commedia dell'arte", were additional sources of "l'Avare": "L'Amante tradito", "Il Dottor baccettone", "Le Case svaligate", "La Cameriera nobile". But, since the exact dates of these comedies are unknown, it is more probable that instead of their being source material for Molière, their authors imitated "l'Avare"⁵. For other possible sources one may consult Körting's "Geschichte des französischen Romans im 17 Jahrhundert" volume two page seventy⁶, and volume eight of the "Zeitschrift

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1. "Gr. Ecr.", Tome 7, p. 14 ff.; Levi, p. 9 ff., intr.
 2. "Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France", Tome 1, pp. 38-48.
 3. "Biblioteca de Autores Españoles", Tomo 31, p. 551.
 4. Ibid., Tomo 49, p. 195, p. 13 Apuntos Biográficos y Críticos: "Preciso es convenir que en medio de los méritos que avaloran aquel drama, no puede concederse á su autor el de la invención, pues no solopudo tener presentes al escribirle las dos obras maestras de Plauto y Molière, 'La Aulularia' y 'El Avaro', sino que adoptó y copió evidentemente el personaje, argumento, y hasta el título de una de las novelas de la célebre doña Maria de Zayas, como puede verse comparándolas entre sí; sin que acertemos á explicar la distracción de don Vincente García de la Huerta que, al insertar esta comedia en su diminuta y mal escogida 'Colección del teatro español', supone que está tomada de la novela de Cervantes, titulada 'El Casamiento engañoso'."
 5. "Gr. Ecr.", Tome 7, p. 14 ff.; Levi, p. 17 ff., intr.
 6. Levi, p. 18 intr.

für neufranzösische Sprachen und Litteratur", p. 51ff., the article entitled "Die Quellen des Avare von Molière" by W.W. Knörich. . We have not been able to examine these sources of information, however. As to the suggestion of M. Levi, that Molière might have got some ideas for his comedy from Martial's "Epigram nine", Book nine, and Lucian's dialogue "The Cock or The Dream", we do not see, upon examination of both epigram and dialogue how either could have been at all suggestive to Molière.

If the student of "l'Avare" should take up only the play itself he would be led into a study of the conception of French comedy in general, plot, character, and stagecraft in the seventeenth century.

Still other ways in which the play might be studied are in its poetic versions, in its translations, and in its foreign adaptations. It is only with the last field of research however, that we shall deal in this inquiry, for we limit ourselves to a study of the influence of Molière's "l'Avare" upon English Comedy of the eighteenth century.

Of direct, avowed imitations of "l'Avare" we find but two of any note in the eighteenth century. One is by Shadwell and the other by Fielding, both entitled "The Miser". For the whole period from 1668 to 1800 we find seven imitations of "l'Avare". The first in date is that already mentioned, by Shadwell, presented at Covent-Garden in 1671. The second is a play by John Corey entitled "Metamorphoses or The Old Lover outwitted", staged in 1704. The third is the adaptation that we have already noted by Fielding, presented in 1732 at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. The next is a sketch by J. Hughes of the first act of "l'Avare",

which was never performed. It was also called "The Miser", and dates from 1735. Another eighteenth century version of "l'Avare" is that of M. de Boissy, dating from 1752. It is doubtful whether this version, again called "The Miser", was ever played. Edward Tighe in 1788 'cut' Fielding's "Miser" from five acts to three. This condensed form of the play, known as the "Cut-Miser" was often played at the time in Drury-Lane. The last version of "l'Avare" that we know anything about is "The Miser" by Jack Wild, prompter of Covent-Garden, another condensed form of Field-¹ing's comedy.

In "Les Grands Ecrivains", in the "Notice" on "l'Avare" there are listed four English versions of the play, those of Shadwell and Fielding, and two others of 1732 and 1792². That of 1792 is no doubt the condensed form of Fielding's comedy by Tighe. We have not been able however to find any version besides Fielding's³ bearing the date 1732. Neither "Le Moliériste"⁴ nor the works of Charlanne⁵, Beljame⁶, or Miles make any note of a play of that date other than that by Fielding, which might be called a version of "l'Avare".

Of plays that show slight influence of "l'Avare"⁷ Miles cites six: "The Woman Captain", 1680, "The Squire of Alsatia" 1688, and "The Amorous Bigot", 1690 by Shadwell; "Love for Love",

1. - "Catalogue of the Molière collection in Harvard Library", p. 127.

2. - "Gr. Ecr.", Tome 7, "Notice sur L'Avare".

3. - "Le Moliériste", Tome 3, 5 août 1881: "Les Plagiaires de Molière en Angleterre", par M. Van Laun.

4. - Charlanne, "L'Influence Française en Angleterre", p. 287.

5. - Beljame, "Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres".

6. - Miles, "Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy", p. 223.

7. - Ibid., pp. 13, 97, 105, 122, 129, 130, 145, 158, 166, 197, 202, 203.

1695, by Congreve; "The English Friar", 1690, by Crowne; and "Mamamouchi", 1671, by Ravenscroft. In part two of our inquiry we shall deal separately with each of these plays.

In Part I we shall discuss the two plays whose authors acknowledge their indebtedness to "l'Avare", comparing them as to plot, treatment of the character of the miser, and tone. It will be our task to try to prove that the influence of "l'Avare" upon both Shadwell and Fielding was great; that both writers used Molière's plot, with deviations or additions; that each depicts the character of a miser, but only to justify the title of his play, so to speak, not from the same motives as those which probably urged Molière to create Harpagon; and that in the matter of spirit or tone the plays differ widely.

As we have said, we shall deal in Part II with those plays in which one can detect some influence of "l'Avare" upon their writers, but which are not built entirely upon the French comedy. We shall first consider the three other plays of Shadwell that indicate his use of "l'Avare": "The Woman Captain", "The Squire of Alsatia", and "The Amorous Bigot"; and then Congreve's "Love for Love", and Crowne's "English Friar".

In our Conclusion we shall resume briefly the points we have made, in the endeavor to show wherein Molière is superior to his imitators, and to make it clear that no matter how well they themselves claimed they were "working him over", they fell far short of the standards he set.

Part I.

English Comedies of the eighteenth century adapted from
"l'Avare".

There are no radical differences of form to be noted between "l'Avare" and the plays with which we are comparing it. They are all in five acts and in prose. While English plays of the eighteenth century are regularly supplied with a Prologue and an Epilogue, as well as with interspersed songs or "catches" and rhyming couplets at the end of acts, none of these are to be found in "l'Avare". Prologues and Epilogues are to be found however in French comedies of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Part I.--A.

"L'Avare" versus "The Miser" by Shadwell.

In the Prologue to the "Miser" Shadwell conceals his name because he is ashamed of having stolen from the French, and because he is uncertain whether his play will be a success or not although a farce he thinks, "in half French, half English dress" is more likely to be popular. Here then we have one reason for his use of "l'Avare" as the base of his "Miser", to secure its success with the public. In his Preface he tells us he adapted "l'Avare" to the English stage by introducing into it more persons and more action, and that it was laziness that induced him, as it did his brother playwrights, to draw upon the French

comedy for inspiration. Not content with this statement, however, he goes still further and says: "I think I may say without Vanity, that Molière's Part of it has not suffered in my Hands,"¹ To-day this opinion makes us smile, because a single reading of his play shows us how superficial it is in comparison with the original. Of course, what Shadwell borrowed and left unchanged did not suffer, except by being connected with what he believed just as good or better, his own window-breaking, bullying, ribaldry.

Molière gives us a masterpiece, orderly in exterior structure, and true to human nature in its delineation of character because he went at his task seriously, remelting and recasting in his own mind, so to speak, what he took from his sources. In writing his play he naturally took account of the demands of French comedy of the time and of his public. Although both authors wanted first of all to write a popular play, Shadwell had no thought, evidently, in adapting "l'Avare" to an English audience, of offering them a work that, while pleasing them, should still show them to themselves in the mirror of satire for their own future improvement. Carried away by the desire for success he yielded in this play as well as in his

1. Shadwell, "Works", Vol. 3, Preface to the "Miser."

others with which we shall be concerned rather to the approbation of the crowd than to the dictates of a higher ideal. Shadwell revealed his authorship of the "Miser" only when its success was unquestioned. Perhaps some may object that Molière too wrote for the approbation of the crowd. He did. But he did so under the sway of ideals that Shadwell lacked. Again, some one may say that we should not expect a masterpiece from Shadwell, much less one that is an imitation, knowing as we do that he was not the foremost playwright of his time. We did not expect a play better than Molière's. But when Shadwell says Molière has not suffered in his hands and thinks he has improved upon him, his presumption makes us resent his attitude at once and censure him.

Shadwell's personages in the "Miser" corresponding to those in "L'Avare" are as follows:

| "L'Avare" | "The Miser" |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Person ⁿ ages | Dramatis Personae |
| Harpagon | Goldingham |
| Cléante | Theodore |
| Elise | Theodora |
| Valère | Bellamour |
| Mariane | Isabella |
| Maître Jacques | James |
| La Flèche | Robin |
| Frosine, Dame Claude | Mrs. Cheatly |

It will be noticed that in the English comedy Mrs. Cheatly is the combination of Frosine and Dame Claude of "l'Avare", and that Seigneur Anselme of "l'Avare" is left out. Among the other persons in the "Miser" are Squeeze senior, and Squeeze junior, to whom Goldingham wishes to marry Theodora. Hazard and Rant are friends of Theodore's. In addition there are the Justice, the Constable, Mrs. Lettice, women of ill-repute, and numerous bullies, servants, and fiddlers. The scene is at London, mostly in Goldingham's house. The unity of time is fairly well maintained, the action of the play taking place during the course of a single day, but that of action not at all. Perhaps the question of the significance of the names in the comedies that we shall study is only a minor issue, yet it is an interesting one.

Names of the characters
in Molière

The names of characters in
the French theatre of the

seventeenth century are usually symbols, as it were, for types, but this is not always true. Harpagon, the Greek word meaning a "grappling-hook", is a happy choice for the name of a miser always reaching out after money. It is not original with Molière, as we find it in the supplement to the "Aulularia" by Codrus Urcens. Cléante and Valère are type names for the young lover. Elise and Mariane

have no particular significance. La Flèche, Brindavoine, and La Merluche are names given in disdain to servants. Frosine is of course an abbreviation of Euphrosyne.

| | |
|--|---|
| Names of the characters in Shadwell | What we have said about the names in French comedy of the seventeenth century is true of those in English comedy of the following century. It is not so apparent in Shadwell's "Miser" though, as in Fielding's. In the former we may note that the name Goldingham suggests the miserly traits of the character. Bellamour is a name for the personage corresponding to Valère of "l'Avare", Hazard and Rant are admirable names for these two gamblers. The name of Squeeze was probably taken from a character of this name in "The Projectors" by John Wilson, 1664, and the name Cheatly well designates the intriguing character of the woman who bears it, |
|--|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| "L'Avare" vs "The Miser" as to plot character drawing, and tone | The main part of Shadwell's "Miser", |
|--|---|

says Miles in "The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy," is almost a translation of "l'Avare." It forms about half the play, however, the other portion being taken up by added characters in scenes of London low-life. While Molière's plot constitutes the greater part of the "Miser" it is obscured by useless material which unfort-

unately gives the play its tone.

Act One of both plays

In the first act of "l'Avare" we learn that Valère, having rescued Elise from drowning has become steward in her father's house and won her love. Moreover he has so ingratiated himself with Harpagon, her avaritious father, that he is well on the road towards gaining his friendship. Elise advises him to get her brother Cléante on their side, but Valère, aware that he cannot win over two such contradictory natures, urges Elise herself to undertake the task. Already the Elise-Valère plot is unfolding and we see we have to deal with a father who has estranged himself from his children by his excessive avarice.

"The Miser" opens with a visit to the Miser's son Theodore of two friends, Hazard and Rant, who joke with him about his seeming ill humor. He assures them that there is nothing weighing upon his mind, but they persist nevertheless in trying to relieve him of the "blues" and tell him of the arrival in their neighborhood of a young lady named Isabella, whom Mrs. Cheatly the match-maker has promised to bring to a ball at Charing-Cross. This news disturbs Theodore, who informs his friends that he already not only knows Isabella, but loves her, and that she is much too good for their company. The friends then leave, after arranging for a dinner party at Chatolin's inn.

Thus Shadwell starts out with an exposition of the Mariane-Theodore plot, while Molière begins with that of Elise and Valère, to which immediately succeeds an exposition of that of Mariane and Cléante. So far we find no hint in Shadwell of a miser, whereas Molière has introduced him to us from the start through his daughter and steward.

When Elise and her brother exchange their secrets, we discover that Cléante cares for Mariane, who is a loving daughter to her invalid mother, and that they are in poor circumstances. He has decided to tell his father of his love for her, and if disinherited to leave home to seek his fortune. Elise is about to promise to go with him in that event when Harpagon appears scolding his son's valet La Flèche, whom he suspects of having stolen some of his money. La Flèche makes us further acquainted with Harpagon by his asking how he can steal in a house where everything is under lock and key.

With the scene between Theodore and Bellamour in Shadwell we have the first sign of miserliness. We learn that Goldinham is a money-lender and a pawnbroker. The next scene, between Theodore and his sister Theodora, corresponds to that with which "L'Avare" opens. Here Shadwell translates many whole sentences from Molière. For

example, when Elise replies to Valère, "Non, Valère, je ne puis pas me repentir de tout ce que je fais pour vous", he has Theodora answer Ballamour in the "Miser" with "No, Bellamour, I cannot repent of any thing I do for you."

Whenever Shadwell translates a passage or a single speech from "l'Avare" he usually cuts it down. Bellamour seems not to have become acquainted with Theodora as Valère did with Elise. At any rate we hear nothing of how they first met. Brother and sister exchange confidences as in "l'Avare," but Shadwell represents Theodore in this scene as being so bitter towards his father that we dislike him for this attitude, whereas in "l'Avare" we are never out of humor with Gléante throughout the whole play. As in "l'Avare" brother and sister agree to tell their father about their love affairs, lament at the avarice on his part that drives the one to gambling and the other to stint herself in dress, and to decide if disinherited, to seek their fortunes together. The scene between Goldingham and Robin, Theodore's valet, is almost an outright translation from "l'Avare" but one to which Shadwell has added unnecessarily gross touches. We cannot excuse Shadwell for this degrading in tone of one of the most comic and pleasing portions of the French comedy.

The remainder of the first act of the "Miser" is also

the same as that of "l'Avare." Both Harpagon and Goldingham deplore the worry that money causes, and then begin to gloat nevertheless over the treasure which they have buried in the garden. Neither in so doing notices for several seconds that his son and daughter have entered the room. Each knows then that his children have heard him talking about a sum of money, and so pretends to them he is lamenting the lack of it, not gloating over its possession. Each calls his children his enemies for having, as he believes, spread the report that he is wealthy. Goldingham says people will think from his son's mode of living that his father is "made up with Gold," and reproaches Theodore as Harpagon does Cléante for his extravagance.

When Theodore and Theodora tell their father they wish to speak with him concerning marriage, as Cléante and Elise do with Harpagon in "l'Avare," he tells them that that was the very matter uppermost in his mind. Shadwell, following closely the Molière plot, has Goldingham draw Theodore out about Isabella only to inform him at last that he intends to marry her himself. Theodore is to marry a "grave Matron of about fifty," and Theodora the scrivener's son, Timothy Squeeze, "a very thrifty young man." Just as Cléante retires overcome at the thought of having his father marry Mariane and of being obliged himself to marry a widow and as Elise protests she will not marry Seigneur Anselme,

so Theodore withdraws, leaving his sister to confront her father and refuse to marry young Squeeze. Then follows in the "Miser" almost a translation of Molière's famous "sans dot" scene, where Bellamour acts as arbiter between Goldingham and Theodora, as Valère does between Harpagon and Elise. In Molière Valère asks Harpagon to permit him to continue his persuasion with Elise, a request to which Harpagon readily yields. Shadwell has Goldingham suggest to Bellamour that he advise Theodora, and then ask him about the day's transactions in his pawnshop and then close the act with this couplet:

"The greatest Pleasure I can have of life,
Is, in cold old Age, to have a warm young Wife."

This last speech of Goldingham's more than any other probably that has preceded, shows a different conception of the character of the miser in the two plays. Molière gives us a miser in love to be sure, but throughout the play Harpagon never betrays the disgusting senile passion that is all too plain on the part of Goldingham in the "Miser." In both plays, however, the old men are so far from sensible that they imagine they can gain the affections of those whom they intend to marry, seeming not to realize that the sole reason they would be tolerated would be that they have money.

Act Two of both plays

At the opening of the second

act of the "Miser" Shadwell

wastes time on scenes not bearing directly upon his main plot, whereas Molière tells us immediately that La Flèche has arranged a loan through Maître Simon between his master Cléante and a man who is as anxious as Cléante himself to remain unknown. While Shadwell imitates this portion of "l'Avare" he shortens it, and closes the act with the recognition scene between Goldingham and Theodore, wherein Squeeze rejoices, thinking that if Theodore is disinherited his own son, upon marrying Theodora, will receive a larger portion. Theodore, chagrined at the miscarriage of his affair receives the following counsel from his valet Robin:

"- - - -at Misfortune ne'er repine,

While there are handsom Women, and good Wine."

In "l'Avare," after the recognition scene, we find La Flèche and Frosine discussing Harpagon, for whom Frosine says she is negotiating an affair, and that she expects a reward for her trouble. La Flèche agrees that she is adept at making dupes of most men, but that Harpagon is such a miser that he loves money more than honor or virtue.

La Flèche proves to be right, for Frosine fails, after praising his appearance and health, ~~and~~ magnifying her success on his behalf with Mariane and her mother, ~~and~~ by the story of a law-suit that she has to meet. She never-

theless decides not to give up the affair since if she succeeds she is sure of a reward from the side of Mariane and her mother if not from Harpagon.

There is no excuse for the first scenes of this second act of the "Miser" in which Timothy Squeeze is coached in love-making by his father, and where by putting the lesson in practice he so bores Theodora that she is obliged to leave his presence.

Next we find Mrs. Cheatly plotting with Robin and then with Goldingham, with whom her flattery and excessive praise of Isabella's frugality avail as little as the efforts of Frosine with Harpagon in "l'Avare."

In "l'Avare" the scene remains throughout the act in Harpagon's house, whereas for a part of the time in the "Miser" it changes to Chatolin's inn. About the only commendable point in the act is that it closes with the dramatic recognition scene between Goldingham and his son Theodore.

Act Three of both plays

In the third act of "l'Avare", when Harpagon gives his servants and children instructions concerning the supper he intends to have in honor of Marine and her mother, we have a scene that indicates his character better probably than any other in the play. Harpagon threatens his servants with a curtailment in wages if anything is broken and from

his children exacts promises of good behavior towards his intended bride. The most amusing part of the scene occurs when he tells Maître Jacques, at the same time cook and coachman, about the evening's entertainment. Incredulous at first, Maître Jacques finally believes his master and asks for money in order to provide a meal fitting for the occasion. He exasperates Harpagon and finally tells him what the world thinks about him. They say he has special almanacs in which fast days are doubled; that he had his neighbor's cat arrested for the theft of a leg of mutton, and that when stealing oats from the manger of his own horses one night a servant caught him, and mistaking him for a real thief, gave him under the assumption, a good beating.

Shadwell in the third act of the "Miser" diverges more and more from the scene management in "l'Avare." The miser scenes taken from Molière with others having almost no connection with the plot. Moreover he changes the place of the action once within the act. This liberty, however, is not unique with Shadwell, because it was the usage of the English as opposed to the French stage to vary the location of the action within an act.

The act opens with an agreement between Bellamour and Theodore that is not found in "l'Avare" to aid each other

in each others love affair.

The scene in "l'Avare" in which Frosine flatters Harpagon is but a sketch in the "Miser". Mrs. Cheatly is obliged to look after her law-suit herself, just as Frosine in "l'Avare". After this incident the scene changes to a tavern where we find Hazard and Rant, Mrs. Joyce and Timothy Squeeze at cards. With much noise and levity they all join in singing a "catch" to the accompaniment of fiddles.

with the carrying out by servants of young Squeeze, who is dead drunk, this portrayal of low life ends and we are back again in Harpagon's house. For once we discover Goldingham in an amiable mood. Bellamour has told him that Theodore wished to borrow the money for someone else, so he is no longer angry at his son. The scene that follows is taken wholly from Molière, even to James' being cook and coachman, Socrates' proverb, and the drubbing of James by his master and the steward.

Molière introduces Mariane, whom Frosine brings to Harpagon's house, just after Harpagon and Valère have finished chastising Maître Jacques. She is uneasy concerning the interview with Harpagon. To Frosine she says she detests him all the more since having received the attentions of a certain young man. Frosine however advises her to marry the miser for his money, saying he will not live

three months. Mariane does not like the notion of marriage with such intents. When Cléante appears she tells Frosine that this is the young man she has been speaking about. Obeying his father's injunctions Cléante compliments Mariane to such an extent that he vexes Harpagon, who cannot put in a word. Seeing him becoming more and more exasperated Frosine cuts the interview short by saying it is time to go to the fair. Harpagon orders the carriage. To Mariane he says he regrets having no luncheon prepared for her. Cléante however, has seen to this. In the next scene Cléante takes off his father's ring and gives it to Mariane.

From the scene where Goldingham and Bellamour in the "Miser" give James a beating, Shadwell translates the remainder of the third act of "l'Avare" except the very last part. Instead of having Goldingham as Molière does Harpagon, go to meet the man who has come with money for him, Shadwell has the act close with Theodore's leading the way to the luncheon.

Act four of both plays The beginning of the fourth act of "l'Avare" is concerned with a consultation scene between Mariane, Elise, Cléante, and Frosine, in which Frosine proposes the plot of the false countess. After Mariane leaves comes the amusing

dialogue in which Harpagon pushes Cléante to confess his love for Mariane. They part in violent anger. Meanwhile La Flèche has stolen the money and now meets Cléante who goes off with him to examine what is in the chest. Harpagon who has discovered his loss returns in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment. This scene is the only monologue in the play, and it brings the act to a dramatic conclusion. Moreover it brings us back to the main consideration of the play, the characterization of the miser, and in fact rounds out the portrayal of his character. In the preceding acts we have been a little distracted from the miser by our interest in the love affairs of the young couples to whom he is causing so much annoyance. A strong scene was necessary to center our interest again upon the main character and we have it in this monologue.

Shadwell opens the fourth act of the "Miser" with a translation of Molière's scene where Frosine proposes the countess plot which is not carried out however in "l'Avare". Mrs. Cheatly in the "Miser" proposes a similar plot that in the next act is in effect carried out. Left alone with Theodora upon the departure of Theodore with Isabella, Mrs. Cheatly tries to entice her into going to an entertainment in Covent-Garden. Theodora, however, is aware of Mrs. Cheatly's character, as here aside in this case shows: "This

woman, I fear, is a little scandalously given. I will not trust her." When Mrs. Cheatly has left, foiled in her attempt upon Theodora, Bellamour rushes in to say that Goldingham intends young Squeeze shall marry his daughter that very night. Immediately upon this appears young Squeeze himself, who is dead drunk. Ballamour hopes the condition of the bridegroom will at least delay the ceremony, but Goldingham thinks it a fortunate occurrence, for now the young man will not be likely to ask for a portion with his bride, and goes out to fetch a parson. At this critical point, when the triumph of the "Miser" seems assured, bailiffs come to arrest Young Squeeze and carry him off.

Another plot to disconcert Goldingham is that of his son who intends drawing his father into a conspiracy against the government by working upon his covetousness. This plot does not, of course figure in "l'Avare" and is probably of Shadwell's own invention. It would seem that it is unnecessary, however, since Mrs. Cheatly, so distracts Goldingham's attention from *Isabella* by her portrayal of the rich old countess that he renounces all intentions of marrying that young woman who has greater charm but less wealth.

The next scene, between Goldingham and Theodore is imitated from that in "l'Avare" between Harpagon and Cléante. Shadwell does not follow it up with the scene between Gold-

ingham and his servants closing the act with the miser's lamentation over the loss of his precious casket, as Molière does, but takes this opportunity to give his audience several scenes of horseplay and street brawling in which the actors are Mrs. Cheatly, Mrs. Lettice, old Squeeze, Rant, Hazard, a Constable, and a group of fiddlers and window smashers. As a portrayal of contemporary local color these scenes are no doubt highly successful. As an addition, however, to the interest of the play as a whole, they count for nothing. They are not connected with any of the love plots, nor do they throw further light either upon Goldingham's character, or that of any other important person in the play.

Before bringing "l'Avare" to
 Act Five of both plays. a close Molière gives us one more scene in which he shows us Harpagon's eagerness to regain his money. In this scene between the miser and Maître Jacques we have a piece of delicious comedy. It is at once a further characterization of Harpagon's avarice and of Maître Jacques' astuteness in taking advantage of his master's emotion to discover evidence on which, wishing to be revenged upon him for his overbearing attitude towards him, to convict Valère of the theft.

With the next scene, that of the misunderstanding between the miser and his steward about the theft of the

treasure the one meaning his money and the other the miser's daughter, Molière concludes his study in characterization, and in the remaining few scenes rapidly brings the play to an end.

Seigneur Anselme, father to Valère and Mariane, drops from the clouds, so to speak, and amid general recognitions and rejoicings Cléante manages to strike a bargain, as it were with his father, namely, that if Harpagon consents to his son's marriage with Mariane his money shall be returned to him intact. Anselme agrees to pay the commissary, to have Harpagon a suit made for the double wedding, and to defray the all expenses, but what above all pleases Harpagon is that Valère does not ask for a marriage portion with Elise. Then when everyone departs to acquaint Mariane's mother with the good news Harpagon still true to his besetting vice, goes out to look at his precious "cassete".

In the last act of the "Miser" Shadwell continues his pictures of low-life. First we have young Squeeze who comes to beg Theodore's pardon for no longer being able to marry Theodora. On waking that morning he found himself a married man--the ceremony having taken place (so say Hazard and Rant, who have brought the whole thing about in order to please Theodore) while he was drunk.

When Timothy Squeeze takes his leave of Theodore Robin

comes in with the miser's chest and both then make off to see what it contains.

Mrs. Cheatly now enters with the countess of Puddle-Dock. Upon meeting her Goldingham is not impressed to the extent of making love to her at once, but excuses himself to make a visit to his ~~chest~~, saying he will return presently. He discovers his loss and runs back into the presence of the Countess (who is no other than Bridget, a waitress friend of Mrs. Cheatly's) in a fit of anger and exasperation. He even suspects Isabella of the theft, saying if she has had a hand in it he will hang her. If he does not find the money he intends to hang himself. The scene is very realistic, contains much action and is also an admirable exposition of the extent to which avarice has taken hold upon Goldingham. James as Maître Jacques, denounces the steward as being the thief. The ensuing scenes first between Goldingham and James and then between Bellamour and the miser are from "l'Avare" containing literal imitated translations in many places.

Bellamour, however, has done better than Valère. He is already married to Theodora. Theodora not only tells his father he is in possession of his money chest but that he has seized upon it for the King's use. Goldingham denies owing the King anything, but Theodore asks him if he imag-

ines he can commit treason for nothing. Goldingham then recalls having given his son permission to hide arms and ammunition in the garden, and, seeing himself trapped, agrees not to pursue the matter any further of having Bellamour put in prison, and to let his son keep the money. Theodore then tells his father not only that there is nothing but lumber in the chests, but that he and Isabella also are already married. Goldingham, enraged, calls down the vengeance of all the furies upon "this engine of the Devil, Cheatly, with her damn'd Countess of Puddle-Dock."

The newly married couples ask the blessing of Goldingham, which he gives them in this fashion. "May the perpetual spirit of Contention wait upon ye; may ye never in your lives agree in one Thing; may the Name of Quiet ne'er be heard betwixt ye; and to compleat all, may ye never be asunder, and so farewell."

Bellamour and Isabella discover that they are brother and sister, that their father has died leaving no will, that the youngest son has taken charge of the estate. Thus we see Shadwell has in part followed the Molière dénouement, not showing enough originality on his own part to close the play in another fashion, as Fielding does his version of the comedy. At the very last Shadwell gives us a farce. Old Squeeze has been caught with a Mrs. Joyce, a friend of Mrs. Cheatly, and her daughter Mrs. Lettice, whom young Squeeze

married in his drunken fit. Father and son reproach each other and finally old Squeeze agrees to marry Mrs. Joyce. Theodore rewards Mrs. Cheatly and Robin his valet, who introduces the fiddles for a dance. The play closes with the following apologetic speech by Theodore:

"Now we have done I must confess I have transgressed in my Duty to my Father, which I could not help, unless I would have neglected a greater, which I owed to your Beauty my dear Isabella, and my Love; and I hope

My passion will a just excuse be thought;

What is urged on by Love, can be no fault."

Part I. --B.

"L'Avare" vs "The Miser" by Fielding.

Form in Fielding Fielding's "Miser", like that of Shadwell, is also a five act comedy in prose, with Prologue and Epilogue, as well as rhyming couplets at the end of each act. Shadwell omits the rhyming couplet at the end of two acts, whereas Fielding leaves it out but once.

As to form it follows "L'Avare" more closely than Shadwell's comedy, for while Shadwell does not divide his acts into scenes, Fielding has more scenes in each act than Molière. How different Fielding's purpose in writing his play was from that of Shadwell may be gathered from these lines in his Prologue:

"Thus, without characters from nature got,
without a moral, and without a plot,
A dull collection of insipid jokes,
Some stole from conversation, some from books,
Provided lords and ladies give 'em vent,
We call high Comedy, and seem Content.
But to regale with other sort of fare,
To-night our author treats you with Molière.
Molière, who nature's inmost secrets knew;
Whose justest pen, like Kneller's Pencil, drew.

In whose strong scenes all characters are shown,
Not by low jests, but actions of their own." 1

Whereas, as we have said before, Shadwell did not care to write a play that should elevate the stage, it seems evident from the lines we have quoted that Fielding thought first, not only of faithfully rendering what he took from Molière, but also of doing it in a different and more elevating manner from that used by the writers of his time. His play then seems to have been an attempt to reform the comedy of the time as to fidelity to nature and decency of tone. Although he knows the audience is used to a play full of unnatural speeches and low jests, he still dares to risk a play that is free from both, relying upon the excellence of his original and his own facility of adaptation to please the public. Far from judging his own play after the didactic fashion of Shadwell, Fielding does not say Molière has not suffered in his hands, but that he will be happy provided his audience by their applause signify that he "has not injur'd the French authors cause." 2

Fielding then merely suggests in his Prologue that he has done what he intended and given faithful presenta-

1. Fielding, "Works", Vol. II p 383, Prologue to "The Miser".
2. Fielding, "Works" Prologue to "The Miser", Vol. II. p. 383.

tion of Molière. He does not make any claims, but relies upon the judgement of his audience as to whether the French author has deteriorated or not from having passed through his hands. In view of the absence of such claims on his part we are all the more willing to praise Fielding for his success in adapting "l'Avare" to the English stage, whereas our censure of Shadwell is all the stronger since having made claims of faithfully presenting Molière we find that he failed to do so.

The following table will show the correspondence of Fielding's personages in the "Miser" to those in "l'Avare."

| "L'Avare" | "The Miser" |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Person ⁿ ages | Dramatis Personae |
| Harpagon | Lovegold |
| Cléante | Frederick |
| Elise | Harriet |
| Valère | Clermont |
| Mariane | Mariana |
| | Mrs. Wisely, her mother |
| La Flèche | Ramilie |
| Frosine, Dame Claude | Wheedle, Lappett |
| Le Commissaire et son clerc | A lawyer |
| Maître Jacques | James |

From these lists of characters we see that in Fielding's "Miser" we have no one who corresponds to Molière's Siegneur Anselme. Additional characters are Wheedle, Mariana's maid Charles Bubbleboy, and the following list of tradesmen whose names indicate their particular occupation, Mr. Decoy, a Broker, Mr. Furnish, an Upholsterer; Mr. Sparkle, a Jeweler; Mr. Sattin, a Mercer; and Mr. List, a Taylor. As to the significance of the names Fielding gives his personages, they fit in most cases the characters who bear them such as Lovegold, Lappet, and Mrs. Wisely. We have already mentioned the tradesmen. Charles Bubbleboy, as we might expect from his name is a half witted fellow. The most interesting name perhaps of the whole list is that of Ramilie, Frederick's servant. In 1706 Marleborough defeated the French under Villeroi at Ramillies in Belgium, and in commemoration of this victory the name Ramilie was applied in England to fashions of the period. The Ramilie wig and the Ramilie hat were worn till the time of George II.

"L'Avare" vs "The Miser" by Fielding
as to plot, character drawing, and
tone.

Having already
given a synopsis

of Shadwell's "Miser" we shall here confine ourselves to an outline of Fielding's comedy, with comments when necessary on its significant variations from "l'Avare."

Sir Walter Scott calls it a translation of "l'Avare"¹ yet while many passages in Fielding's "Miser" are exact almost translations of the French comedy, the English play deviates so far in some respects from Molière's that it must be called an imitation or adaptation.

Act One of "The Miser" by Fielding

The scene of Fielding's "Miser" is

Lovegold's house in London. The first three scenes of act one are concerned with life below-stairs. The lively conversation of Mariana's maid Lappett with Frederick's valet Ramilie sets the tone of the play at once, a sprightly, cheerful atmosphere that is maintained throughout all five acts. Wheedle, Mariana's maid, visits Lappet, and from their sympathetic condolence, characteristic of persons in their station we learn that Frederick, Ramilie's master is one of Mariana's numerous admirers. Lappet informs her visitor that she is unable to serve her with any refreshments since everything is kept under lock and key. She has a good substitute, however, for a collation in the food for gossip that she imparts to Wheedle.

Some time ago her mistress was rescued from drowning and later on defended at the play by a young man whom she and the young lady in question have succeeded in estab-

1. Scott: "Life of Henry Fielding."

lishing in the house as Lovegold's clerk. Lappet vows there will be no remaining in the house for her when the trick is discovered, and that for this reason she has arranged all her affairs so as to be able to leave at a moment's notice.

Clermont, the clerk, urges Harriet, the miser's daughter to try to get her brother Frederick on their side. He is afraid to approach him himself, having incurred his displeasure because he humors Lovegold in railing at the young man's extravagance.

Frederick makes his confession to his sister before she can tell him of her own affair, however. Harriet says her brother has started a wild-goose chase indeed, in trying to win the affections of a coquette like Mariana. He is not discouraged though, and asks his sister to take Lappet into her confidence and try to win over Mariana. Harriet consents and in return for such a service says he can do her a favor of much the same nature shortly.

The scene where Lovegold searches Ramilie is every bit as amusing as its original in "l'Avare". When Lovegold tells his children after they have come upon him talking about the treasure buried in the garden, that he intends to marry Mariana, Frederick excuses himself, leaving Harriet to find out that she must marry their neighbor Mr. Spindle, a rich old bachelor. She protests that she will

never do so, and Lovegold as firmly persists in saying that she shall, and upon the appearance of Clermont, asks the clerk to be arbiter in the discussion.

Clermont agrees with the Miser that Harriet should marry Mr. Spindle, especially since he is willing to waive the question of a portion. At first Harriet is confused at the apparent treachery of her lover, who in the interval when Lovegold steps out to see what the dog is barking about, reassures her that he is only humoring her father. Thereupon she tells Clermont that he may depend upon her not giving in to her father, and when Lovegold leaves them together Clermont is delighted. He regrets the hypocrisy he is lending himself to, but quickly throws aside all remorse to exclaim in the couplet that closes the act:

"When love is great as mine,
None can its pleasures or its pains declare;
We can but feel how exquisite they are."

Act Two of the "Miser"
by Fielding.

The second act opens with a scene between Frederick and Ramilie. The latter has negotiated a loan between his master and an unknown money-lender who by the interest rate he asks as well as by his astute demand that the borrower accept a quantity of useless goods as the equivalent of a fifth of the whole sum betrays the chief trait in his character.

Immediately upon this scene comes the one wherein Lovegold discovers that his own son is the other party to the loan, and he is himself discovered. The next scene is in Harriet's bed-room. Mariana is paying her friend a visit and telling her of her ailments, of the plays she has seen lately and finally of how she is continually bored to death by Frederick's attentions. Harriet in turn informs Mariana of Lovegold's intention of proposing to her, at which Mariana goes off into a fit of laughter as she pictures to herself "the lovely gravity of age" in her latest conquest. Harriet tries to press her brother's case but Mariana tells her she will hate her if she is serious and when Frederick appears and tries to find out what success his sister has had, Mariana cruelly tantalizes him.

Lappet has been engaged by Lovegold to plead his case with Mariana, but when she comes to tell him of her success, flatters his vanity and tries to work upon his sympathy. She has in the end to agree with Ramilie that she can get nothing from him in the way of money. Her resolution, however, is sensible as this shows she speaks at the close of the act:

"Fools only to one party will confide,
 Good politicians will both parties guide,
 And, if one fails, they're feed on t'other side."

Act Three of the "Miser"
by Fielding

In the third act of the play we have the understanding between Frederick and Clermont, who resolve to help each other to win the lady of his choice.

Lovegold announces to his children and clerk that he intends to entertain that evening for Mariana and her mother and also for Mr. Spindle. Harriet is sent off by Lovegold to deliver the invitations and Clermont is given charge of the arrangements with instructions to be economical, whereas Frederick is admonished to behave civilly during the supper towards the guests.

The scene where the miser gives James his orders is a good translation of the same scene in "l'Avare" even to the farcical encounter between James and Clermont.

Just there the scene changes to the street where Ramillie meets Lappet. The maid says all her rhetoric availed nothing with Lovegold, but that she has another affair on hand for which she expects compensation if she succeeds.

It is the same affair, however, as before, only now she looks for her reward from Mariana whom she expects to argue into marrying Lovegold for his money. When Mariana and her mother visit Lovegold, he presents his son and daughter and then proceeds lavishly to compliment Mariana in flowery language. Frederick soon causes him to change his manner, however, to one of exasperation by suddenly

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taking the ring from his hand and giving it to Mariana, who finally accepts it to Lovegold's extreme discomfiture.

When Lovegold is called out on business Harriet requests Mariana's mother to partake of the luncheon that has been prepared, and so leaves Frederick alone with Mariana. He is astounded and grieved beyond words that she intends to marry his father instead of himself.

Upon returning to the room with Mrs. Wisely Harriet asks Mariana if she has told Frederick she loves him. Mariana immediately gets vexed and a quarrel ensues between the two young women. Mrs. Wisely complains to Lovegold of the unmannerly conduct of his children, whereat he drives them from the room. Then Mrs. Wisely and Mariana consent to his urgent request that his marriage to Mariana take place that very evening, and leave promising to return later on. Lovegold then tells Clermont of his latest intentions concerning his wedding, giving him charge of the arrangements for the supper that evening. Clermont expresses his astonishment that Lovegold should now be willing to marry a poor girl like Mariana but love has got the upper hand of avarice and Lovegold uses Lappet's arguments about Mariana's frugality to Clermont.

In the soliloquy that closes act three Clement marvels at the change in Lovegold whose avarice he thought

it impossible for anything to surmount. He is astonished likewise that Mariana should consent to marry an old man whom he knows she despises. Since she is a coquette, however, he thinks there is no answering for any of her actions. His monologue ends with the following rather illuminative comment upon matrimony:

"Whoever takes for better or for worse,

Meets with the greatest blessing or the greatest curse."

Act Four of the "Miser"
by Fielding.

The next act, takes place in

a hall in Lovegold's house.

Ramilie has just informed his master that Lappet is trying to forward Mariana's marriage to his father. Frederick tells him to bring Lappet to him, but Ramilie says he intends to make Lovegold believe the opposite of every word Lappet has told him.

No sooner has Clermont told Frederick that his father is going to marry Mariana than Lappet appears. Both men empty their pockets to her, whereupon she promises to do all she can now do to prevent the marriage she has hitherto been so anxious to bring to pass. Frederick is in despair, believing Mariana is false to him, but Clermont assures him that at bottom he has a good nature and good sense, even tho she is outwardly a coquette.

Lappet in her scheme of undoing what she has done be-

done begins with an attempt to dissuade Mariana from marrying Lovegold by making him ludicrous in her eyes. She has no success, however, but is by no means at the end of her resources.

Lovegold tries to get Mrs. Wisely to agree to his making a settlement upon her daughter, but this involves a delay to the marriage that Mrs. Wisely does not like. She consents to the delay however, provided that Lovegold sign a contract which her lawyer shall draw up in which Lovegold promises to marry her daughter. The old man reluctantly agrees to this arrangement.

When Mrs. Wisely leaves him to see her lawyer concerning the contract, Lappet rushes in in excitement asking him if he is already married. When he says he is not she can hardly restrain her joy. Feigning that she has his interest ardently at heart she then proceeds to paint Mariana's portrait of the extravagant coquette.

At last Lovegold is convinced by what she says and by her tears, that it will never do for him to marry Mariana. So when Mrs. Wisely's ^{lawyer} tries to get him to sign the contract Lovegold drives him from the house.

The continued passing back and forth from one decision to another of Lovegold and the repeated changes of side made by Lappet and Ramilie in the act are a disagreeable exaggeration for the sake of adding action and prolonging

the play. This defect is most confusing to a reader. It may not be so annoying when the play is represented on the stage but at any rate it is pushing the comic side of the play too far. We prefer Molière's directness.

No sooner has Lappet persuaded Lovegold of Mariana's extravagance than Ramilie tells him that he is a liar and in his turn persuades the miser that his children have bribed Lappet to impose upon him. This exaggerated credulity on Lovegold's part is tiresome because so contrary to common sense even if we allow for the fact that the whole play, as are all plays, for that matter, is pitched out of the ordinary tone of everyday life. When Frederick next meets Lappet he compliments her on her success with Lovegold, neither knowing that her work has been all undone by Ramilie. They soon discover it however for the valet himself blurts it out to them the very next moment, bringing down his master's wrath upon his head. Not only does this turn of events make his master turn against him but Lappet even swears she will never speak to him again. Nevertheless he has another project which he determines to execute at once, namely to steal Lovegold's treasure, if he can find it, and get even with the miser and regain the affection of his master by making him a return for his loss of Mariana.

Frederick's despair increases when Mariana in the next scene tells him herself that as his mother-in-law she will make a change in the house that shall not be disagreeable to him.

Just as he is leaving Mariana and her mother he meets Ramilie with a small money chest under his arm. His valet tells him to follow quickly. This last turn of events raises his depressed spirits and he leaves the room with the remark that this may save him yet.

The act closes with Lovegold's lament over his lost treasure and his denunciation of the whole city even, as thieves. Although this scene is overdrawn by Fielding, it is hardly so forced as we find it in "l'Avare" or Shadwell's "Miser."

Act Five of the "Miser"
by Fielding

The scene of act five is a hall in Lovegold's house. Several servants are rushing around attending to various errands set them by their new mistress to be. Everything is torn up. The upholsterer and carpenter are on hand receiving orders from Mariana and her mother about new furniture and so forth. The mercer and the jeweler are both displaying their goods and Mariana orders the most expensive articles they have to sell. Amid all this bustle and confusion, however, enters Lovegold who demands what it is all about. One by one he drives the tradesmen out of the

house and then goes off lamenting that he signed the contract to marry Mariana. He meets Laffet whom he says he wishes he had believed when she told him how extravagant Mariana was. She says he is not so bad off however since he is not yet married. This gives him no consolation though since he has given Mariana a bond of ten thousand pounds to marry her. Rather than lose the money he swears he will kill himself.

At this point Clermont appears, richly dressed, and the scene that follows is an imitation, in fact almost a translation, of the similar one in "l'Avare". Clermont speaking of having stolen Lovegold's treasure means, of course, his daughter, whereas the miser imagines that Clermont means his money.

At last we find Mariana and Lappet together, and more wonderful still, Mariana is serious for the first time in the play. She admits having kept her real intentions secret to all except Lappet. In the next scene the two confront Lovegold and Lappet speaking for Mariana says she will consider an abatement of two thousand pounds on the bond of ten thousand. Lovegold falls right into the trap that Lappet is setting for him. She draws him aside and suggests a plot to him in such a way that he believes he has conceived it himself. Lappet is to swear that Mariana when she has received from Lovegold the eight thousand

pounds, has stolen them and Lovegold is to break open a bureau drawer to make the robbery look plausible.

In the very next scene, when the miser goes off to get the money, Lappet tells Mariana that she is going to "swear a robbery against her." When Lovegold returns he exchanges with Mariana the money for the contract.

At this point Clermont reappears with Harriet whom he presents as his bride. Lovegold in a rage cries out and tears his hair over the loss of both his money and his daughter, much after the fashion of Shylock. Frederick, however, contributes the proposal that brings the play to a close. This is where the Molière plot appears for the last time. If Lovegold will give up all pretensions to Mariana, Frederick agrees to restore to him his stolen money. Lovegold does so but accuses her of the theft of his money, calling upon Lappet as witness. Lappet, however, says dramatically that Lovegold had bribed her to accuse Mariana. Thus the Miser is put to shame before them all. Frederick agrees to restore his father's money but does not at once tell him where it is. The last we see of Lovegold is when he goes out swearing he will have his son hanged unless he gets back every penny he has lost. Then amid rewards and congratulations all around the play ends in a dance and this last dictum by Clermont upon the vice

of the miser:

"He hoards eternal cares within his purse;

And what he wishes most, proves most his curse."

Part II.

Other English Comedies of the eighteenth century showing the Influence of "l'Avare".

Shadwell's "Woman Captain". Of all the authors of the eighteenth century whose plays can be said to show any influence of "l'Avare" none seems to have undergone this influence more than Shadwell, for besides his "Miser", the earliest of his plays that makes plain his debt to Molière, three others show a knowledge of "l'Avare". In the Prologue to "The Woman Captain", first represented in 1680, the author says that the sole object of this five act prose comedy is to make his audience laugh. The characters in the play that remind one of "l'Avare" are Gripe and his wife, the Woman-Captain. One scene especially seems to have been suggested by Molière's comedy¹. This is the last part of act one, where Gripe instructs Richard, his new servant. His whole design is to be rich, for which end he keeps his senses under control, he says, since "if one sense get the better of a man, he'll ne'er be rich". Gripe cautions Richard to provide the least costly dishes, and by no means is he to buy wheat-bread, butter, or wine. "The Patriarchs drank nothing but Water", he says. When young Mrs. Gripe enters complaining of the tyranny she is obliged to undergo, her old husband tells her that being the treasure she is he keeps her locked up at home where no one can come near her. None of his excuses mollify her however, and when Richard announces that

1.-Miles, "The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy".

someone has come to borrow money on a mortgage, she goes out resolving she will attempt by any means under the sun to regain her liberty. The means she employs is masculine disguise. She impersonates her brother, a navy officer. This ruse gives the play its name, and Mrs. Gripe is successful in her attempt at escaping from the surveillance of her jealous old husband. Beyond this one character there seems to be no other resemblance in the play to "l'Avare".

Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia". In 1688 appeared Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia", a five act comedy based on Molière's "L'Ecole des Maris". This comedy, in addition to being written in the licentious tone of the day is different from the rest of Shadwell's plays in that it contains so much of the slang of the time, or "cant" as the author calls it, that Shadwell is obliged to insert an "Explanation of the Cant" at the beginning of the play. In this "Explanation" we find that Alsatia stands for White-Fryers, the "popular" prison of the day in London.

There are in all twenty persons listed in the *Dramatis Personae*, twelve men and eight women, an unusually large number of persons even for an eighteenth century English comedy. In addition there appear in the play fiddlers, constables, musketeers, a serjeant, a watch, a character called Tiptaff, and the rabble. This is the longest of Shadwell's plays.

The influence of "l'Avare" is noticeable in one character only, that of Sir William Belfond, whom Shadwell describes in this extract from the *Dramatis Personae*: "Sir William Belfond, a gentleman of above five thousand pounds per Annum, who in

his Youth had been a Spark of the Town, but married and retired into the Country, where he turned to the other extreme, rigid and morose, most sordidly covetous, clownish, obstinate, positive and froward".

Thus we have to deal not only with a miser in this character but with a man whose disposition is all awry. The following lines from act four were no doubt suggested by Molière's "sans dot" scene. Sir William is talking about the girl whom he intends his son to marry with his brother Sir Edward:

"Sir Ed.-The Person of this Girl is well chosen for your Son, if she were not so precise and pure.

Sir Will.-Pr'ythee, what matter what she is; has she not 1500 pounds clear?

Sir Ed.-For a Husband to differ in Religion from a Wife!

Sir Will.-What, with 1500 pounds?

Sir Ed.-A precious Wife will think herself so pure, she will be apt to condemn her Husband.

Sir Will.- Ay, but 1500 pounds, Brother.

Sir Ed.-You know how intractable misguided Zeal and spiritual Pride are!

Sir Will.-What, with 1500 pounds!

Sir Ed.-I would not willingly my son should have her.

Sir Will.-Not with 1500 pounds?

Sir Ed.-I see there's no Answer to be given to 1500 pounds ."

Shadwell's "Amorous Bigot." The last play of Shadwell's that shows a reminiscence of "l'Avare" is "The Amorous Bigot", a five act comedy in prose produced in London in 1690. The scene of the play is Madrid. The names of the characters are Spanish or pseudo-Spanish except one, that of the Irish priest Tegue O'Divelly. The Amorous Bigot is named Belliza.

In the fourth act Miles thinks he finds a passage that was suggested by "l'Avare" act three, scenes six and seven, but upon examination of the play we cannot agree with him. This play should not rightly have found treatment in this place if it were not for the word of Miles, who perhaps has studied out the resemblance between the two, or the debt of Shadwell to Molière in this play, more than we have done.

Congreve's "Love for Love." "Love for Love" by Congreve is thought by Hazlitt, Macaulay, and Edmund Gosse, to be his masterpiece. It was first produced in London upon the opening night of a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1695.

The outline of the plot was suggested by "l'Avare", although Congreve used in the writing of it not only his knowledge of "l'Avare" but of all of Molière's plays. Sir Sampson Legend is the heartless father whose avarice drives his son

into a rebellious attitude, and who becomes Valentine's rival for the affections of Angelica only to lose her in the end as Harpagon does in "l'Avare". The play is a keen satire on miserliness and hypocrisy. There are but two characters in the play who are morally good, Angelica and Valentine. The others are vicious without exception, especially Valentine's father and friends, Scandal, Tattle, Foresight, and Trapland. The tone of the play is witty throughout, but far from edifying¹.

According to Miles, this play, with all its defects of tone and unnaturalness of character drawing shows nevertheless how Congreve profited from his knowledge of Molière. The play cannot be said to be a version of "l'Avare" even though it contains part of the same plot, and a well drawn miser. Congreve has so worked over his material that we have a play entirely different from Molière's. Owing to this fact and also to the fact that Congreve was a greater dramatist than Shadwell or Fielding it is not surprising that "Love for Love" instantly reached a stupendous popularity. While its tone is too immoral for the present day we cannot help admiring its sprightliness, verve, and gaiety, even though we do not care for the characters who contribute these qualities. "Love for Love" seems to be the only one of Congreve's comedies that shows any trace of the influence of "l'Avare".

In passing it may not be amiss to note that it is also the longest of Congreve's plays, containing three songs for

1.-Gosse, "Life of Congreve", pp. 66-78.

music and a dance. One of these songs beginning:

"A nymph and a swain to Apollo once prayed",
is considered by Mr. Gosse to be one of Congreve's most graceful
and cynical lyrics..

Crowne's "English Friar".

Crowne's "English Friar" or "The
Town Sparks" is an adaptation of
"Le Tartuffe". Its purpose, as Miles observes, is to satirise the
power of the Church under Charles II. Produced in 1690 the play
was highly successful from its first representation. The only
echo of "l'Avare" found in the play is the character of Lady
Pinchgut, interesting as being the only woman miser we know of
in the comedies of the time, who however is not intimately con-
nected with the plot. Miles thinks that she was introduced by
the author only as a concession to the demand for more persons
which was characteristic of the comedy of the times.

Her coachman reveals that like Harpagon she keeps
everything, even the servants' liveries, under lock and key, and
that she has reduced her horses to skeletons by locking their
oats in her own closet.

In passing we are obliged to remark that in no other
play that we have examined in the course of this inquiry do we
find such a bitter attitude of hate and loathing towards the
Catholic church as we find expressed by Crowne in this play,
which is directed primarily against the Jesuits.

1.-Gosse, "Life of Congreve", p. 73.

Conclusion.

Upon considering the resemblances and differences between "l'Avare" and the versions of Shadwell and Fielding we are led to the following conclusions. The influence of "l'Avare" was especially great upon contemporary English playwrights as we know from our examination of the plays of Shadwell, Crowne, and Congreve. Of the three Shadwell was most influenced by "l'Avare", for he not only made an adaptation of it but used suggestions from it in three other plays. In regard to the influence of the French comedy upon Fielding we notice that although he was not a contemporary of Molière yet he experienced the influence of "l'Avare" enough to make an English version of it that acquired great popularity.

As we have seen in our analysis of the plot in "l'Avare" and its two English versions, the English authors made no radical change in it. In each version we have all the main characters that appear in "l'Avare" in the same relationships. Shadwell omits Anselme, but still uses the Molière dénouement, which Fielding ignores. The latter is more original in the last two acts of his "Miser", whereas Shadwell adheres strictly to Molière's plot all through. Shadwell's originality lies in the scenes of low-life wherein he depicts the loose morality of the day, and also in one or two minor episodes such as the working out of Frosine's countess plot. He does not materially alter any of Molière's characters, his most striking departure from his French model being in the matter of the tone of his

"Miser", which is far from elevating.

Fielding, on the other hand, shows more originality by far than Shadwell in working over "l'Avare". As we have said he departs from the Molière plot about half way through the play. His government plot, however, is no doubt original, also his having Mariana disgust Lovegold by her extravagance, and of having the miser trapped by the joint efforts of Mrs. Wisely, Mariana's mother, and Lappet, his daughter's maid. Fielding appears more original also when we look at his characters. He introduces one not in "l'Avare", Mariana's mother Mrs. Wisely. His conception of the character of the miser is much the same as that of Molière. Mariana however is different. In fact, were she not the coquette he makes her his whole play from the third act on could not be brought to a conclusion. Fielding has the merit also of giving us a clean play, which Shadwell does not.

It is safe to say also that in both versions the interest is centered rather upon the two pairs of lovers than on the miser, whereas in "l'Avare", even when he is not on the stage we still feel the effect of his avarice upon the actions of his children and servants. All in all Fielding kept more nearly to Molière's ideal. By this we do not mean that one should infer that his play is anywhere near perfection. It is not a play of a central idea in the degree that "l'Avare" is, however. The love plots occupy the foreground, so to speak, and we lose sight of the miser. This circumstance no doubt led both Tighe and Wild to condense it to three acts, by which process it seems that it ought to gain much in the way of unity of theme and action.

As to stage technique and the question of the unities in general neither Shadwell nor Fielding experienced Molière's influence so strongly as to follow him in these matters. Both English writers represent their plays as taking place in a single locality, the miser's house, yet each changes the scene to the street or an inn at will during the course of an act.

Moreover, the difference in motivation between "l'Avare" and its English imitations is very evident. Exits and entrances are carefully led up to by Molière. In the English plays on the contrary, characters come and go, no one knowing how or why, whole scenes being interjected for apparently no reason whatever.

Shadwell seems to have written merely to please the "groundling", so to speak, not caring for ideals of form in his play. Fielding it seems, cared to please as much as Shadwell, but relied on the worth of his original to do this, and tried at the same time to make his version interesting to his public. Like "l'Avare" his "Miser" has the appearance of being written for persons of cultivated taste. In regard to tone we think much credit is due to Fielding for having departed from the beaten path of levity to present a good comedy in clean language.

In fine, while Molière's imitators fell short of any approach to the standards he set them in "l'Avare", yet each in his style gave us a good play, and while they were as a rule too prone to levity, they nevertheless wrote plays that could be acted, that after all were vehicles of real Moliéresque satire, and that fulfilled the purpose with which they were written, namely, to please the play-going public of that day and age.

Appendix.

Of "The Projectors" by John Wilson, nothing can be said other than that it is remarkably similar in plot to "l'Avare" for a play written before that comedy appeared. It had little success if staged at all, which seems doubtful. Written probably in 1664, Langbaine records its being printed in the following year¹. Shadwell and Fielding no doubt used "The Projectors" as material for their adaptations of "l'Avare". In Shadwell's "Miser" two characters named Squeeze appear, a name the author took no doubt from that of an exchange broker in "The Projectors". The usurer in Wilson's play is called Suckdry and his servant Leanchops. Charlanne's comment upon the play shows how closely for a play built only on the "Aulularia" of Plautus, it resembles "l'Avare",² : "Le caractere de Suckdry, une manière d'usurier grippe-sous, toujours préoccupé de son or et tremblant à la moindre alerte pour son tresor, ressemble d'assez pres à Harpagon, et Leanchops n'est pas sans analogie avec Maître Jacques. Ferdinand, affichant aupres de l'avare, par la modestie même de son costume, un grand amour d'économie, afin d'attirer la confiance de Suckdry et obtenir de l'usurier la main de sa fille Nancy, n'est pas sans nous rappeler Valère, amant d'Elise, fille d'Harpagon. ----- Il nous faut suspendre notre jugement sur la question d'imitation: jusqu'à plus ample-informé, c'est au poète anglais que revient l'honneur d'avoir mis "l'Avare" à la scene."

1.-Langbaine, "Account of the English Dramatic Poets" p.513.

2.-Charlanne, "Influence Française en Angleterre", p.287 and 288.

Miles does not mention "The Projectors" at all, nor any version of "l'Avare" not even Fielding's, after 1700 since the period he is dealing with is that of the Restoration only. We have not been able to examine Ravenscroft's "Mamamouchi", 1671, in which, according to Miles, a father and son are rivals as in "l'Avare", and where a "femme d'intrigue" named Betty Trickmore disguises herself as a German princess.

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